DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 330 662 SP 032 974

AUTHOR Bliss, Leonard B.; Reck, Una Mae
TITLE PROFILE: An Instrument for Gathering Data in Teacher Socialization Studies.
PUB DATE Feb 91
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association (Boston, MA, February 13-16, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Teachers; *Career Choice; Educational Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Measures (Individuals); Preservice Teacher Education; *Profiles; *Social Influences; *Socialization; Student Teachers; Teacher Orientation

ABSTRACT

Teacher socialization begins much earlier than the moment the novice teacher enters the classroom for the first time. Contemporary theory suggests that this socialization may begin in infancy or early childhood and progress through the preservice teacher education experience. In order to observe the effects of the school environment on novice teachers, baseline data must be obtained from them between the time they complete their preservice training and the time they begin their professional activities. This paper describes a profile data collection instrument designed to gather the baseline data (information about the novice teacher's demographic and socioeconomic status, factors influencing the career decision, professional activities during preservice teaching, teaching experience before beginning in-service work, perceived importance of professional sources of knowledge, and confidence in teaching abilities). A copy of the profile instrument is attached. (JD)

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PROFILE: An Instrument for Gathering Data in Teacher Socialization Studies

Leonard B. Bliss

Department of Educational Foundations

Una Mae Reck

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Appalachian State University

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Presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association, February 13-16, 1991, Boston, MA.

Running head: PROFILE: USE IN TEACHER SOCIALIZATION STUDIES

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Abstract

Teacher socialization begins much earlier than the moment the novice teacher enters the classroom for the first time. Contemporary theory suggests that this socialization may begin in infancy or early childhood and progress through the preservice teacher education experience. In order to observe the effects of the school environment on novice teachers, baseline data must be obtained from them between the time they complete their preservice training and the time they begin their professional activities. This paper presents an instrument designed to collect these baseline data.

PROFILE: An Instrument for Gathering Data in Teacher Socialization Studies

In 1983 we were told that we were a nation at risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). We had squandered the educational high ground of the 1960's and, had this situation been imposed on us by an outside power, we would have considered it the equivalent of an act of war. The National Commission's report was but the first volley in the latest movement to reform America's schools. More was to follow. Three years later, the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) told us that, ". . .the key to success lies in creating a profession equal to the task -- a profession of well-educated teachers prepared to assume new powers and responsibilities to redesign schools for the future" (p. 2). Among its recommendations was the creation of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; the empowering of teachers to make decisions concerning what would go on in schools; the requiring of a graduate degree for entrance into the profession; the creation of systems of differentiated staffing; and the linking of rewards for teachers based on student outcomes. The issuing of reports and recommendations for reform continues. Currently, the national attention seems to be focused on two concepts: The

decentralization of power within educational systems, and parental choice concerning the schools their children will attend. The latter appears to be based upon idealized (if not always realized) concepts of American capitalism (i.e. schools, as airlines and oil companies, will compete for students resulting in better, more efficient and responsive services) while the former seems to follow from the traditional idea of a profession as a self-regulating group of practitioners who have the expertise and the will to make appropriate decisions for their group. The idea of teacher empowerment also has its roots in the intuitive feeling that those at the grass roots are closer to the situation and in a better position to make decisions about what needs to be done. The commission and task force reports that have been rampant since A Nation at Risk deal extensively with the need to produce teachers who are highly trained and educated. However, they fail to touch upon the issue of the readiness of those being trained to be teachers and those already in service in the profession to act as change agents or to be receptive to change. Any model that suggests that reform in teaching is a cognitive process where better education will result from teachers who are better educated in academic subject matter and are given the

power to make educational decisions is incomplete since it does not view the teacher as a member of the society of the school and the effects of this society on teacher decision making.

Tyler (1975) points out that the failure of the high school physics course developed by the Physical Science Study Committee (PSSC) in the early 1960's was due to the inability of high school teachers to recognize the necessity for a new kind of learning experience and a new kind of teaching strategy even though enrollments in physics classes were low and were continuing a downward trend. When Goodlad and his associates (1974) observed a sample of PSSC classrooms, they found that the PSSC materials were being used in the same way that the previous textbooks had been used. It appeared that most high school physics teachers thought that the way they had been teaching physics had been just fine (although they acknowledged the need for more accurate, up to date textbooks) and were not at all concerned about the dropping enrollments in their courses. Tyler suggests that the reason for the failure of this curricular reform effort was the failure of the PSSC curriculum designers to work with school personnel to determine what problems they felt they were having in the teaching of physics. This may certainly have been

part of the problem. However, an additional, and perhaps stronger, influence on the failure of this and other attempts of school and curricular innovation may be the very culture of the school which tends to be conservative and resistant to change. Specifically, it may be that people within schools are unable to perceive the need for change because they have become part of this culture which requires its members to conform to present practice in order to remain comfortable members of the society of the school.

Teacher Socialization

Teacher socialization is the process by which an individual becomes a participating member of the society of teachers. While the term "teacher socialization" had been used in the literature since the work of Dollard (1939), it was Lortie's efforts in 1975 which brought forth a surge of scholarly work attempting to describe the processes which lead to this phenomenon. Sprinthall and Thies-Sprinthall (1983) describe teachers as adult learners and it is clear that the socialization process is, indeed, a learning process which, when it is to be a positive process, requires developmental growth on the part of the novice teacher. This is not a simple process since the cornerstone of any developmental process involves the upsetting of an individual's

current state of development and equilibrium, creating an uncomfortable dissonance which may result in a state of equilibration (i.e. an attempt to incorporate the new into the old without changing the old). True learning requires actually giving up old, more concrete, more stylized systems of thought. Separating a person from old learning is what socialization is about and this can be a traumatic process which can lead to a sense of alienation and result in novice teachers leaving the profession early in their careers (Haggstrom, Darling-Hammond, & Grissmer, 1988).

Kohl (1984) stated,

> I believe that the impulse to teach is fundamentally altruistic and represents a desire to share what you value and to empower others. Of course, all teachers are not altruistic. Some teach in order to dominate others to support work they'd rather do or simply to earn a living. . . . Most teachers I know, even the most demoralized ones, who drag themselves to oppressive and mean schools where their work is not respected and their presence not welcome, have felt the calling at sometime in their lives (p. 58).

While the issue of teacher altruism is still unsettled, Kohl's statement assumes that the decision to

teach is made well before students enter programs of teacher education. Therefore, learnings are taking place concerning the roles of teachers and schools, which can be described as socialization, early in the life of the prospective teacher. Posner, Strike, Hewson, and Gertzog (1982) suggest that students come into teacher education programs with previously developed ideas and beliefs and with skills developed through past experience that color the ways in which they interpret and use the information obtained in teacher education programs. In fact, Lortie (1975) suggests that these predispositions exert a more powerful influence on teachers' attitudes and behaviors than either preservice training or even later socialization in the workplace. Feiman-Nemser (1983) summarizes three models which may account for these predispositions. The first is an evolutionary model which suggests that human beings have natural habits of correcting each other, sharing what they know, and pointing out answers. These habits have been acquired though generations and are acted out in families and schools. Children not only learn what they are told by others, they learn to be teachers.

The second model is a psychoanalytic one in which socialization is a function of the relationships

teachers have had as children with significant adults such as parents and teachers. It suggests that the choice to become a teacher is, to a great extent, an attempt to become like significant others in one's childhood. Therefore, the types of teachers that preservice education students become are determined by the early effects of these significant others on their personalities.

A third model suggests an "apprenticeship of observation." According to this model, socialization occurs through the internalization of teaching procedures during the time that students spend in contact with teachers during their elementary and secondary school careers. During formal teacher training, this latent teaching culture is activated and has such a strong influence in shaping conceptions of the teaching role that subsequent training may have little ability to alter these preconceptions.

Recently, Hoy and Woodfolk (1990) reported a study wherein a group of student teachers observed prior and after their student teaching experiences demonstrated changes in their beliefs concerning their teaching ability. While they became less confident in their beliefs that schools could bring about changes in students (general efficacy), they became more confident

in their own abilities to motivate and be effective with difficult students (personal efficacy). While this may initially appear to be internally inconsistent, it is consistent with the above models, since it suggests that these students interpreted their experiences to support their already internalized perceptions of their roles in teaching.

The literature, then, suggests that socialization into teaching begins years prior to a person's entering a preservice teacher education program and continues while the individual is in such a program. Any attempt to describe the role of situations which the graduates of these programs experience while on the job as inservice teachers must take into consideration both preservice experiences and the experiences and resulting feelings and attitudes that they bring to their preservice programs. Further, since the quantity and quality of socialization that goes on during preservice teacher education programs, including student teaching, is unclear, initial data collection should take place as close to the end of the preservice experience as possible. The purpose of this proposed presentation is to describe an instrument which can be used to effectively gather information about these experiences, feelings, and attitudes.

The PROFILE Instrument

The PROFILE data collection instrument is a six page self-report instrument which is administered to preservice teacher education students at the end of the student teaching experience and gathers information in the following areas:

1. Demographic and socioeconomic status
2. Factors influencing the career decision (including the influences of significant others)
3. Professional activities while a preservice student
4. Teaching experience before beginning inservice work
5. Perceived importance of professional sources of knowledge
6. Confidence in teaching abilities

Significance of the PROFILE Instrument

The teacher socialization process begins well before teachers first enter the schools as professionals. In fact, current theory suggests that this process may begin as early as infancy or early childhood. In order for educational researchers to be able to draw conclusions concerning the effect of the working environment of inservice teachers on this process, a meaningful body of baseline data must be

available concerning the socialization status of individuals initially entering the teaching profession. These data should be gathered as close to the time of initial entry as possible. The PROFILE instrument can provide researchers with these data and can also be readministered to inservice teachers after they have been on the job for a period of time to measure changes that may have taken place due to the inservice experience.

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Appalachian State University

Profile of Teacher Education Students

The purpose of gathering the following information is to help the College of Education develop a composite picture of the typical teacher education student at ASU. None of the following information will be identified with you personally. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

Please circle the appropriate response.

1. Sex 1) female 2) male

2. Age
1) 18
2) 19
3) 20
4) 21
5) 22
6) 23-25
7) 26-29
8) 30-39
9) 40 and over

3. Major
1) K-6 or K-4 (Child Development)
2) 6-9
3) reading
4) special education
5) speech pathology
6) special subjects (art, music, PE, health)
7) 9-12 (academic area, e.g. math, English)
8) library science

4. Mother's Educational Level
1) did not complete high school
2) high school graduate
3) community/technical college graduate
4) some college work
5) college undergraduate degree
6) master's degree
7) Ed.S. degree/6th year degree
8) doctorate degree

5. Father's Educational Level
1) did not complete high school
2) high school graduate
3) community/technical college graduate
4) some college work
5) college undergraduate degree
6) master's degree
7) Ed.S. degree/6th year degree
8) doctorate degree

Indicate which of the following reasons was truly important in influencing your career decision:

12. Teaching provides an opportunity to be creative.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

13. The quality of education must be improved.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

14. I enjoy working with children.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

15. I have always enjoyed attending school.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

16. I can help others less fortunate than myself.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

17. Teaching is a good career for women.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

18. Teaching is a good career for men.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

19. I was not as successful as I had hoped to be in courses that would have prepared me for my initial choice of careers.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

20. Persons I respect encouraged me to teach.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

21. Teachers' salaries are at least adequate.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

22. Teachers have a lot of time off.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

23. Teaching will provide an opportunity to do other things (e.g., coaching, part-time work).
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

24. I can help students gain a sense of personal achievement and self-esteem.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

25. I can help students develop an appreciation for other cultures.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

26. My abilities are well suited for teaching.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

27. I can help students gain knowledge and understanding of important subject matter.
    1) influenced 2) not influenced

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Professional Sources of Knowledge

Rank the following sources of professional knowledge in terms of importance with one having the most importance and eight having the least importance:

34. ____ Courses in the content areas

35. ____ General education courses

36. ____ Courses focusing on methods of teaching

37. ____ Educational Psychology courses

38. ____ Educational foundation courses

39. ____ Synthesis of educational knowledge and practice

40. ____ Reading self-selected books/articles dealing with education or major field of study

41. ____ On-the-job experiences as a teacher (including student teaching)

Confidence in Teaching Abilities

How confident are you in using the following successfully in a classroom situtation:

42. Planning for instruction
    1) not confident 2) somewhat confident
    3) confident 4) extremely confident

43. Classroom management
    1) not confident 2) somewhat confident
    3) confident 4) extremely confident

44. Use of a variety of teaching methods/instructional strategies
    1) not confident 2) somewhat confident
    3) confident 4) extremely confident

45. Knowledge of my subject area/teaching field
    1) not confident 2) somewhat confident
    3) confident 4) extremely confident

46. Integration of microcomputer skills into the curriculum
    1) not confident 2) somewhat confident
    3) confident 4) extremely confident

47. Integration of audio-visual skills/materials into the curriculum
    1) not confident 2) somewhat confident
    3) confident 4) extremely confident

48. Conducting parent conferences and communicating with parents
    1) not confident 2) somewhat confident
    3) confident 4) extremely confident